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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to determine the attitudes of teachers toward inservice education and the roles teachers play in it, this paper records the personal perspectives of a small group of teachers, reflects these views against the literature, and indicates some possible directions. Conceptual and operational definitions of inservice education are provided, and teacher opinions on the following topics are presented and reviewed: (1) conceptual program models; (2) incentives and participation; (3) planning and implementation; (4) staffing; (5) evaluation; (6) research; and (7) funding. A bibliography is also included. (DS)

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PARTICIPANT, INSTRUCTOR, PLANNER:
PERSPECTIVES ON THE
TEACHER'S ROLE IN INSERVICE EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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EDUCATION

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PREFACE

This paper is an attempt to record the personal perspectives of a small group of teachers about inservice education and the roles teachers play in it. To try to discuss inservice education and related issues from the perspective of ten classroom teachers is fraught with risks; the possibility of criticism stemming from the size of the group interviewed is real. Nevertheless, it should be understood that the paper presumes to do no more than to provide a voice for some classroom teachers; to make known their views of inservice education based on their experiences; to reflect, in some degree at least, these views against the literature; and, finally, to indicate some possible directions.

Often a small group can be a microcosm of the larger community and reflect well what the larger group perceives. The interview guide developed for the paper was shared with two University of Maryland faculty members, Judith Ruchkin and James Greenberg, and the Maryland teacher center directors with whom they work. Using the guide, the directors interviewed administrators, supervisors, and teachers in their school districts; their findings were strikingly similar to those in this paper.

To the teachers who so willingly, thoughtfully, and enthusiastically agreed to change schedules and allow me to impose on their personal time, so that we could spend several hours sharing ideas and thoughts by telephone, I am most grateful. My special thanks go to:

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Iris M. Elfenbein

INTRODUCTION

*Inservice is becoming much more of a need than school districts have faced up to at this point.**

An Area of Concern

It is quite possible that concern for inservice education (ISE) surpasses that for all other areas in teacher education today. Almost everyone is in favor of inservice education, despite apparent confusion over the meaning of the term and dissatisfaction with the operation of ISE programs. Like the weather, it stimulates much discussion, but little action.

Inservice education of teachers in the United States has been called a national disaster area.¹ It lacks design and coordination; its direction is unclear and not by any means universal. Few effective coordinated programs are known. As a result of the disorganization and confusion over what constitutes ISE, there are an increasing number of attempts to look at the inservice education of practitioners. These include studies and publications; national conferences; and programs and projects funded by the U.S. Office of Education, the National Institute of Education, state departments of education, and other organizations and institutions concerned with education staff development.

Although some form of ISE has been in operation since the 19th century, "there has not been a broad scheme of inservice education with a clear concept of purpose, appropriate undergirding of policy, legitimacy in commitment, and fixed responsibility for attaining agreed-upon goals."² In fact, staff development operations often have been at the top of the school superintendent's list in rhetoric, but at the bottom in funding priority. Until recently, preservice teacher education was given top priority and received major funding. Emphasis was on the development of basic pedagogical competencies for entry into teaching rather than the renewal of competencies for retention in the profession.

But the picture is changing rapidly. Teacher education is in a recession. Schools--workplaces that a decade ago seemed to offer endless job opportunities and growth possibilities--have fallen on hard times. Education, one of the largest businesses in America, has become a no-growth industry. Teachers are sadly discovering that employment opportunities indeed do have an end; that growth can be arrested.

The "greying" of America's teachers is a direct result of this recession. Many of the more than two million teachers are well-entrenched in their positions, enjoy tenure, and possess permanent certification. The data related to this stable work force are voluminous. In a study done in 1975, it was found that the median age of all teachers was 33 years and that elementary school teachers, on the average, had 7.4 years of experience while high school teachers had eight years of experience.³ Given the arrested state of growth and the increasing maturity of the school

* The teachers interviewed are quoted extensively without attribution throughout the paper; these quotes appear in italic.

Figure 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEACHERS

Number: 10
 Males 3
 Females 7

School Level: Elementary 3
 Middle/Junior High School 6
 High School 1

Teacher Organization Membership (NEA or AFT): 10
 Executives in Local 3
 Executives in National 1

Years of Teaching Experience: Range 5-29
 Mean 13 1/2
 Median 11

Education: B.A. 1
 M.A. 8 (with additional credits)
 Doctoral candidate 1

School Community: Suburban 4
 Urban 3
 Inner City 3

School Socioeconomic Status: High 2
 Middle 5
 Low 3

Roles in ISE: Participant 10
 Instructor 7
 Planner 3
 Organizer 2

States Represented: District of Columbia (1)
 Indiana (1)
 Kansas (1)
 Michigan (2)
 New York (2)
 South Carolina (1)
 Tennessee (1)
 Washington (1)

faculties, the cost of staffing schools will increase. Schooling is a labor-intensive industry in which salaries comprise at least 70-80 percent of local school district budgets. In such a situation, where half the classroom teachers have their master's degree, ISE is seen as a way to stave off the possibility of obsolescence and rigidity of practice that might occur. This period of recession can be productive for inservice education.

The Classroom Teacher and Inservice Education

Inservice to me is a vital part of my job. I don't begrudge inservice; I enjoy it. As a whole, it's pretty good. It has some flaws. Teachers are working to make it better, trying to get something that teachers want, that teachers can use; something that's going to benefit them and eventually their students.

Inservice has always been an interest of mine because I felt that a lot of inservice was highly impractical, very boring, to say the least.

Inservice education programs frequently have been imposed on teachers. The National Education Association has said that "American teachers are the only general practitioners in any profession who are constantly being directly impinged upon by 'experts' without their prior consent."⁴

Much of the ISE literature, concerned with what should be done to help improve the teacher's techniques in the classroom, is written by academicians and practitioners in colleges. It describes what is wrong, what is needed, what the content should be. Often, it is those writers and school administrators who make decisions about who needs inservice experiences and what the nature and content of those experiences should be.

Rather than fitting the needs to what employees say, inservice usually is what the administrators say we need, what they perceive we need. Therefore, they plan it and tell us, "You need this," rather than asking us what we perceive that we need.

Inservice should be initiated by the people it is going to affect. The most carryover occurs where the teachers themselves identify a need they want to remedy.

The classroom teacher, having neither the time nor the opportunity to document experiences, is rarely heard. Yet the more than two million teachers in American schools are a rich source of information and experiences. The purpose of this paper is to share the perceptions of ten teachers from school districts around the country as they reflect on their experiences with inservice education, filling the roles of participant, instructor, and planner. They were enthusiastic and most willing to talk about ISE from their different perspectives. Although a small number, the ten teachers interviewed were selected from diverse school levels, populations, and geographic areas (see Figure 1).

Questions asked in these telephone interviews focused on issues frequently discussed in professional literature. Because the number of respondents was limited, the writer had the opportunity to talk at length with the teachers and permit them considerable time to describe their experiences with ISE. It should be emphasized, however, that whatever generalizations are made in this paper are applicable only to the ten teachers interviewed. The questions were organized under the headings of definition, program, participation, planning, implementation, evaluation, funding, trends, and improvements. An additional heading was introduced after preliminary use indicated that respondents regarded college-based graduate courses differently than they did inservice offerings (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
THE INTERVIEW GUIDE: CATEGORIES AND ISSUES

1. Definition of ISE
2. Program--Purpose, Goal, Objective
 - unity
 - substance
 - offering diversity
3. Participation in ISE
 - motivation
 - incentives
 - time, site
 - staff
 - substance
4. Planning for ISE
 - needs, needs assessment
 - collaboration
 - decision making
5. Implementation
 - staff adequacy, selection procedures, sources
 - strategies
 - materials
 - content and process (often covered in #2)
 - governance
6. Evaluation
 - program
 - participant
 - purpose--relation to objectives, unity (assuming it exists)
 - evaluators
 - research effectiveness, future needs
7. Funding
 - collaboration
 - governance
8. Trends
 - (often covered in #2, #4, #5)
9. Improvements
10. Relationship Between College Graduate Courses and Inservice Offerings

DEFINING INSERVICE EDUCATION

ISE begins at the time one becomes a teacher and continues until one retires. Consequently, it would be all those experiences in between that cause someone to grow in the process of doing whatever it is they are doing. In my broad definition it would include everything--the motivation, one's perception of one's career path, all of those things which affect a person on the job. I would not limit it, as it is often limited, to just the acquisition of skills or the development of some competence or acquiring some new information.

It should encompass the types of things that would affect the teacher's performance in the classroom. We need, at times, to get back to philosophical issues; and, of course, we need the practical side too--new ideas and new techniques.

I don't really use the term "inservice" because of my perception that it is just those things the system does to me, and not those things I do to myself. . . .

What is inservice education?* The literature indicates a wide range of definitions from the very broad one provided by Marsh, "Inservice education is any activity that might improve the effectiveness of education workers through their own development,"⁵ to that of Howsam and his committee who suggested that it is "employment-oriented education . . . those activities which have as their intended purpose preparation for specific demands which decisions within the system have created."⁶ Marsh noted that any education in which a teacher engages would be appropriately included in ISE, while Howsam's definition clearly limits the kinds of activities to those that are job-related and suggests that the element of choice may not always be available to teachers.

Since definition is one of the dilemmas of ISE, the interviews sought to determine how each teacher defines inservice education. The question caused hesitation and provoked considerable thought. But many people provided definitions similar to that of Howsam. All agreed that the primary function is job-related and generally associated with the school district or school. The purpose is to provide information, improve skills, and keep teachers well-informed about current trends.

[Inservice is] taking a course offered within my school system and given by someone in the school system; it deals with different topics that I might be interested in, different techniques that might be helpful to me as a teacher, different programs that I might need to know as a teacher.

Last year there was a great need for reaching the teachers more effectively, using an approach, materials, or suggestions that

* Such terms as staff development, professional development, and continuing education are often used to refer to inservice education. In this paper, all are regarded as appropriate.

could be utilized immediately rather than a very theoretical, philosophical type of inservice training. There is a place for that, but I don't feel that's "inservice"; I don't think it meets the expectations of most teachers for inservice. Personally, I want information that I can use; I want my immediate questions answered.

The instrumental nature of ISE was underlined by each teacher. The notions of practicality and usefulness were repeated over and over again, and ideas of professional growth and new knowledge and materials were emphasized within the context of the local teaching situation. In addition, ISE was identified by most as an offering of the local school, district, system, or intermediate unit--occasionally in collaboration with a local college or university.

Inservice education is for teachers on the job; is usually sponsored by the employer, sometimes in cooperation with local universities; is conducted in the school or at a college campus, but almost always with sponsorship by the local employer; and is usually directed at upgrading skills and conveying new information, usually with a practical, hands-on approach.

The notion of continuing professional education was implicit in many statements and explicit in one. There was concern, however, about participation in ISE after earning a master's degree or achieving the maximum required course work. Professional training stops for many.

Seventy percent of the teachers are at the M.A. maximum, and this is one of the critical problems: nobody is moving. You have an older, maturing staff, all at the top of the salary schedule with no place to go. So there is absolutely no incentive for taking additional course work.

Inservice education means getting new ideas and materials to teachers, especially those at the master's level who have not gone back to school. [It is] a way of preventing some teachers from stagnating and continuing to use the same methods and materials.

Sometimes when teachers take college courses they do not participate in ISE offerings.

I think people who take a master's degree are less likely to get involved with ISE. Even after they finish their degree, few take advantage of inservice education.

The term "offerings" has been used in relation to ISE throughout this discussion because inservice education is comprised of many activities and experiences. While some might be called courses and very few, programs, the term "offerings" seemed appropriate.

In addition to traditional modes of inservice delivery--such as 15-hour, 30-hour, or 45-hour courses for college or ISE credit; summer seminars and institutes; and educational leave--the teachers included two- and three-hour workshops, attendance at conferences, participation in study

groups, and participation in curriculum teams or faculty committees. The college courses, unless offered on-site in the school districts, were generally not included in the discussion of ISE. However, one teacher commented:

The mountain is coming to Mohammed: college credit courses are moving into the district, so teachers don't have to leave the district.

The distinction between college credit courses and inservice offerings seems to be fostered by the state education department and the local school district requirements. In many instances, the teachers indicated that these agencies do not recognize inservice offerings for salary credit, professional advancement, change of position, and other formal professional needs. Thus, the separation is probably advanced by the professional realities the teachers confront. One teacher observed that her colleagues who took master's degree programs or sought salary increments were unlikely to become involved in ISE, since they could see little benefit from such participation.

I see a great difference in the personal attitude of participants as well as the quality of the information given. I think people who are taking courses in a graduate level program are probably working toward a degree or have some specific interest; that is why they have paid their \$300. They have made a commitment. With inservice, courses tend to be more practical. I've rarely heard anyone talk about an inservice course in excited tones.

Other factors contribute to this distinction, made by nine of the ten teachers, between ISE and university graduate courses offered for credit. Generally, the ISE offerings are pragmatic and deal with immediate classroom needs. They are practical and often provide teaching models using appropriate instructional strategies and materials. They also require less time, paper work, and reading and are less expensive. Many are taught by school personnel, including teachers.

Teacher-planned workshops that I've attended really give me more information, and more of the kind of answers that I'm looking for than something that's more classroom oriented such as college courses.

I would say that the workshops tend to be more hands-on materials, what people call "practical." Graduate courses tend to be more philosophical, heady stuff. As far as which the teachers prefer, the majority of the teachers I've talked to, about 75-80 percent, would prefer the workshops. Either they're not willing to spend the amount of time and money involved in graduate courses, or they don't find them very useful.

The college courses were identified as generally intellectual and abstract, providing theoretical background for classroom practice. Some suggested that the courses force participants to think on a higher level and are more challenging than the ISE offerings.

I really enjoy the graduate courses because they tend to raise your level of thinking. To me, it's very stimulating to get away from the cut-and-paste stuff and into a deep philosophical discussion.

College courses require you to work harder. You're paying for something. The level of instruction is usually higher. I would rather earn college credits toward a degree than inservice. College instruction is more intellectual; you have readings and papers to do.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

As a result of this differentiation, inservice education may be defined in two ways: conceptually and operationally.

The conceptual definition of ISE includes all the activities, courses, offerings, and experiences that enable the practitioner to improve professionally. It would include the theoretical as well as the practical. This conceptual definition would support Cogan,⁷ who has indicated that ISE should make up for theoretical deficiencies of the practitioner's preservice education and that educational theory and research should be a large part of ISE programs for teachers. The notion that emerged is found in Edelfelt and Johnson's definition, ". . . any professional development activity that a teacher undertakes singly or with other teachers after receiving her or his initial teaching certificate and after beginning professional practice."⁸

The operational definition of ISE as described by the teachers is different. It ignores the theoretical element and, in fact, pretty much excludes the college-situated graduate courses as well. The focus becomes one of a practical, "hands-on" nature which is directly related to the realities of the classroom as the teachers confront them daily. It provides answers to current questions; provides information about new materials, programs, and trends; and facilitates the development of skills to implement the programs and use the materials.

This pragmatic approach to ISE conforms nicely with a common characteristic of adult learners which has been documented in research--adults are pragmatic in their approach to learning and are motivated by a desire to solve immediate and practical problems.⁹ This characteristic might account for the previously cited distinctions and the conceptual and operational definitions of ISE. Certainly, it suggests alternative considerations in the planning and implementation of inservice offerings.

WHAT CLASSROOM TEACHERS SAY ABOUT ISE PROGRAMS

"Program" is misleading; it implies an overall approach to inservice, and that's not how it works. It's a very piecemeal kind of thing.

Inservice education has been characterized as haphazard and piecemeal, lacking any solid conceptual model. The interviews sought to determine the status of ISE in the ten school districts. Are the teachers aware of any staff development model in which goals and missions are clearly stated? How are the ISE offerings organized? Are there unified programs based on a conceptual model, or even an operational one which suggests unity and a commitment of administrators and the board of education to ISE?

Conceptual Program Models

Several writers have identified conceptual models that offer alternative approaches to the development of inservice education programs. Each model has the potential to provide a framework on which to build a program.

McLaughlin and Berman described two models of ISE, the deficit and the developmental models. They suggested that deficit models provide incentives for ISE participation through salary credit or certification fulfillment and provide little released time for teachers. The developmental model, on the other hand, uses released time instead of monetary incentives for staff development.¹⁰

Florio and Koff, using four categories identified by Tyler and a fifth which they added, provided a typology that ISE should address:

1. Problem Solving--"to gain skills and knowledge necessary to solve problems identified within the local school or school district."
2. Remedial--"to help develop necessary work related skills not gained through previous training or education."
3. Motivational--"to provide tools and motivation to change or improve, to dispose of the instructional rut."
4. Upward Professional Mobility--to acquire "new knowledge, skills, or credentials which would allow [teachers] to seek employment with higher pay, increased status, or in different locations."
5. Defensive Security--"to acquire additional education or training experience . . . as a condition of employment or certification maintenance."¹¹

Edelfelt offered another conceptual model for inservice education based on eight roles of a teacher:

1. An individual professional
2. A teacher of students
3. A member of a faculty
4. A member of a school hierarchy

5. A liaison with parents and the public
6. A colleague of other professionals--people who work in other kinds of professional jobs in education; for example, on state committees and national councils
7. A member of a teacher organization
8. A member of the teaching profession.¹²

Only one district had a unified cohesive ISE program organized around two major themes which embraced both instructional development and curriculum. The teacher who described the program was most enthusiastic and felt it was useful and committed those involved to meaningful, purposeful work. A large sum--\$850,000--had been invested, and several central office administrative positions had been eliminated in order to fund it. This program exemplifies a developmental model described by McLaughlin and Berman.

The district has committed itself to some really meaningful inservice work. They've released teachers involved in decision making; they've organized classes in the buildings to meet specific building needs, or allowed the staff to organize them there; and they've put some money in it--they eliminated ten central administration positions to do so.

It is not surprising to discover that only one district is seen as having a cohesive program since such programs generally derive from clearly stated and well-defined goals. Only four teachers indicated that ISE goals were explicitly stated for their districts and were available in descriptive material. These were broad statements indicating a desire to improve the quality of professional education for teachers, thereby improving instructional programs for students.

The stated purpose is to improve the quality of education and offer opportunities for improvement to teachers.

Incentives and Participation

The Florio-Koff-Tyler model is useful not only to describe programs, but to identify motivations and incentives of teachers participating in ISE programs. Although the intrinsic rewards derived from inservice education--learning something new, developing new skills, becoming a better teacher--were mentioned, major emphasis was on the extrinsic rewards.

Teachers feel these are courses that will really do them some good. Quite a few people at the top of the salary schedule take them because they feel they are really meaningful courses.

Incentives: Some ISE includes graduate hours for degrees or dollars. Most--about 80 percent--offer no rewards.

We had to jump through another hoop in the past. On the building level, all teachers are required to attend or are docked a day's pay.

Figure 3
WHY TEACHERS PARTICIPATE IN ISE

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>Problem Solving</u> | 4. <u>Upward Professional Mobility</u> |
| new programs | not cited |
| professional growth | |
| 2. <u>Remedial</u> | 5. <u>Defensive Security</u> |
| classroom management | certification |
| discipline | requirement |
| human relations | retention of position |
| | salary increment |
| 3. <u>Motivational</u> | |
| professional growth | |
| stipends | |
| released time | |
-

People participate in inservice because it is cheaper than college courses to earn credit for salary increments, and to meet requirements to keep their city licenses.

Before, it was pretty much up to individual teachers to seek out whatever they thought would help, to pay for it themselves, and to put in the time themselves. So I'm really pleased that the district is going this way [providing free inservice on school time].

Figure 3 uses this model to categorize the reasons teachers gave for participating in ISE. Only one teacher even touched on the lack of upward professional mobility. The remarks identify a problem not frequently addressed.

A teacher starting out faces 30 years of doing essentially the same thing. From the standpoint of motivation, that provides a pretty flat incentive. . . . You don't have to do anything to get there except to exist for a period of time. You'll never reach anything; you'll just be a teacher for the next 30 years. That, I think, is a concern the profession has not really begun to face. Whether the answer is to provide some levels of schooling and . . . some intermediate goals, whether that will provide any change in the career path, I don't know. I think there are areas like that we haven't begun to tap.

Planning and Implementation

Unfortunately, I've found that a lot of the people I teach with feel it's just a pain in the neck--something they have to do and that should be done for them. I personally believe that's why

they don't get anything out of it. I think you really have to be actively involved; you have to see a need and help to meet it in order to gain something from the time you put in.

All the districts had some form of inservice education. While there was agreement among the teachers that it is essential to continuing professional development, existing inservice opportunities were sometimes said to be inadequate. Participation in ISE should be productive and useful, but it does not always fulfill its potential. They said that meaningful ISE must provide for teachers' needs and interests and include teachers in the organization and planning.

That, to me, has made a lot of difference: who organizes it and how relevant it is to what I need in the classroom.

How needs were identified in the ten districts varied considerably. The range is indicated by such statements as:

I've never seen anything that asks us what we want or need. I don't think the front line is ever consulted.

The building principal is the only person besides the teachers who might know what they need and who should be responsible for planning.

These comments suggest that needs assessments are relatively nonexistent or imposed. However, on the positive side:

At the beginning of every year, we try to pass out a survey to the teachers (in the same subject area). In terms of inservice programs, what would they like us to have? Check them off and rank them, maybe, from 1 to 10. I know a good many teachers asked for a program on classroom animals.

We have been involved. We put out a survey sheet a few years ago, on how teachers thought inservice could be improved. We got a lot of suggestions, and in the past few years we've tried to follow through on them. We feel they have been a great deal of help as far as curriculum development is concerned. Curriculum seemed to be the main interest; they wanted to do something that would help their classroom performance and reach different groups of students.

When needs assessments were used, personnel were polled by varied groups--the central office, their school building colleagues, or colleagues representing professional organizations.

Sometimes offerings resulted from pressure generated by the community or the federal government. Because of problems inside and outside the schools, communities supported workshops dealing with discipline, human relations, and race relations, and sometimes community agencies offered health-related activities and civil defense activities. The federal government, through such funded projects as programs for the handicapped and the metrics program, forced new inservice offerings. Awareness of other needs arose as a result of school accreditation visits.

Other ways in which ISE offerings emerged:

- Administrators, either district or school, initiated ISE offerings based on what they regarded as obvious staff problems--a situation needed remediation or a new program was being introduced. Teachers were not consulted and participation was required. Interestingly, this occurred in two of the three districts in which the communities identified needs and initiated programs for inservice education.

That's all done by administration; they perceive needs. How they get those, I'm not sure. I have never filled out any kind of survey, and I've been here for ten years.

- Teachers indicated to their building principals or, in one case, to teacher center personnel that they wished offerings and courses in specific areas. These administrators then made arrangements for the offerings.
- All professional education personnel in some districts could initiate a course by submitting a written description to an appropriate group for approval--for example, to a task force made up of teachers chosen by administrators and representatives of professional organizations such as the National Education Association, the International Reading Association, and the Association of Teacher Educators. In another district, any offering that attracted at least 20 people was run.

If I saw a particular trend that I thought should be publicized and introduced, I could propose a workshop; and if 20 people signed up, it could go.

The most frequent form of planning for ISE was done at the building level, usually for inservice days, and usually by administrators.

We have negotiated one inservice day a year. Supposedly the teachers in each building can choose when they want the inservice day, and they establish a committee to plan the inservice day. We have the option of requesting other days if we describe what they will be used for.

However, four districts had informal but organized mechanisms for planning: (a) a task force composed of eight teachers representing different constituencies within the district; (b) a curriculum council in a high school; (c) a subject area committee whose membership included teachers and supervisors from junior and senior high schools and which organized and coordinated ISE instruction; and (d) the most formal and best organized, an inservice committee made up of three teachers from the education association executive board and three administrators. This latter committee resulted from a particularly unique situation--a new school superintendent, as part of his contractual agreement, got the school board to agree to support extensive inservice education. He initiated a "total" program for his entire school district and invited teacher representatives to plan it with him. In another program, the planning included teachers and administrators as well as the local university.

Every spring the state university surveys to see what type of courses teachers want to take for university credit. The district makes a policy of offering teachers several free courses that would receive university credit; this encourages them to get started in a graduate program or take something they are specifically interested in.

We have been very involved in trying to improve inservice education. Because the assistant principal that I work directly with is very interested, the teachers have had a lot of input into what kinds of things are done. He is so cooperative with us, it's made it a really nice situation to work in.

This inservice program is one of the better ones that I've been involved in, and I've taught in six or seven different cities. The reason for it, I think, is that teachers have had some say-so in the planning.

Generally the planning was done after school, although two teachers indicated there was planning done during school hours. In one system, the school curriculum council members had released time to meet and plan together. In another district a few teachers had released time to plan and coordinate ISE programs in the district.

It is clear from these examples that some school districts are attempting to involve teachers in ISE planning. However, needs assessment and planning and organizing for ISE were areas in which teachers did not believe they were sufficiently involved.

No one indicated that teachers should have exclusive control of decision making and planning, but all felt that school faculties should be partners that are consulted regularly. Governance of ISE should be cooperative.

The offerings were generally concerned with the needs of teachers or school programs. Most interviewees felt that the ultimate purpose was to become more effective teachers so that they could help their students. This, they believed, was best done by providing offerings that met teachers' needs.

Inservice education is for keeping up with the trends in education.

[For example:] What can you do for handicapped students in your setting? What do you do with the child who constantly wants attention? We've done some work with self-concept, for teachers and students.

The teachers felt there were offerings of all sorts which might meet a variety of needs. Such perennial topics as classroom management, discipline, organizing for instruction, and using and making materials were cited, while current educational trends--bilingual and multi-ethnic education, teaching the handicapped, mainstreaming, metrics education, and consumer education--were also addressed. But one teacher cautioned:

We must be careful what trends we pick up because our resources and time are very limited.

In past years, offerings had included human relations, race relations, and competency-based education. However, the majority indicated that there was more emphasis on curricular concerns and the development and use of materials than there was on instructional analysis and pedagogical improvement.

Inservice education is usually offered after school, including late afternoons, evenings, Saturdays, and summers; one teacher mentioned weekend retreats. But those seven teachers who had experienced inservice days when pupils were dismissed from school to permit teachers to participate in workshops of their choice on-site were especially enthusiastic.

A revitalization takes place when you have a day without students. Spending a day with adults, talking about education and things that are of interest to you, you share some commonalities. I also think that it really improves you. Sometimes it's fantastic, and the children will benefit from the knowledge gained from some consultants. It's stimulating emotionally and professionally; it's rewarding in several different ways.

We have early released time two times a month to do inservice. Rather than having to meet after school, in the evening, or on Saturdays, we needed time when the total staff was together and a little bit more relaxed.

Generally these offerings made at the building level on inservice days are planned well in advance and teachers are notified of the offerings, from which they can select workshops to meet specific needs. One teacher told of more than 100 offerings during one inservice education day in one school building. Three mentioned inservice education workshops held regularly during the school day for personnel in federally funded programs. Offerings not given during the school day are held at many sites in the school districts. An increased number of credit courses are given in the districts in collaboration with local universities. That no one mentioned college campuses as sites for inservice education seems to be a further indication of the distinction practitioners make between college courses and ISE district offerings.

Two respondents mentioned teacher centers, but they indicated the centers were not staffed to meet the needs of the entire district. In fact, the teacher centers focused on specific curricular areas and many teachers were unaware of their existence.

The teacher center is mainly a resource center for teachers.

In spite of the varied activity, most teachers said that they knew of no centrally coordinated ISE program for the whole school system.

There is no one person in charge of inservice in my district.

As a result, complaints were made about insufficient ISE information and poor scheduling. Teachers want to know what is happening in the district and, certainly, in the building next door. Often, even when offerings or resources are available and open to all, teachers cannot avail themselves of opportunities because of the lack of adequate information dissemination systems or inappropriate scheduling.

Time and site scheduling was a problem. Several people said offerings were made at inconvenient sites at times that did not take into consideration teachers' travel and work schedules. ISE during the school day was viewed as one solution to this problem.

Some inservice courses are not convenient at all for teachers who have to travel. They begin at 3:15 and we leave school at 3:00 p.m.

Sometimes you get there and the school building is locked and the meeting is cancelled. Or sometimes you get there and six people show up and they sit around and chit-chat and don't really present the program. That has happened several times.

The problem of communicating information about ISE offerings was mentioned several times. Few teachers were able to describe effective mechanisms for disseminating information, although one teacher said:

The grapevine is one of the best incentives. When teachers hear a course is good and others have gotten something out of it, quite a few sign up, whether they need the credits or not.

One district published a monthly list through its central office; two other districts published semiannual lists of offerings. Two respondents indicated that building offerings were announced to teachers in the buildings, but teachers in nearby schools remained uninformed. Even where announcements were made, teachers indicated a coordination of offerings and an effective district-wide dissemination effort would be desirable.

Staffing

Most frequently ISE is conducted by school district personnel, including coordinators and supervisors, principals, and teachers. The instructors are usually volunteers or personnel recommended by others in the district because they have the necessary expertise.

. . . People who demonstrate something, have something worthwhile, something fairly new, something that works for them. . . .

School personnel are more competent in meeting teachers' needs. They are more practical in peer teaching.

In one district, the teacher-instructors received the same inservice credit for teaching courses as the participants did for taking them. In other districts, education personnel may offer an inservice workshop if the offering attracts a sufficient number of participants. Selection or screening processes regarding offerings may be nonexistent in such cases.

The other large group providing instruction in ISE is college faculty, who are usually responsible for college-credit courses on-site or for workshops presented at the request of the school faculty or administrators.

[The teachers in] each building went out and shopped for the professor or instructor they felt would be most effective for

their particular faculty. So there have been a variety of people from a variety of different places--mostly university people.

Occasionally, other consultants from outside the school district are requested to provide instruction in areas where special expertise is necessary.

In response to questions about the appropriateness and adequacy of teaching personnel, instructional techniques, and instructional materials, most of the ten teachers indicated satisfaction with all three most of the time, although one teacher said that all were generally unsatisfactory. There was a difference of opinion about the quality of instruction. Teachers were said to be effective instructors because they were able to deal with classroom needs and aid in using materials and solving classroom problems in a pragmatic way. They were more likely to model instructional techniques to be used with pupils in the classroom and to demonstrate effective use of school materials. College professors teaching graduate courses were said to be better organized and to be more able to extend and elevate thinking. Because they dealt with theory and abstraction, they were more stimulating and provocative.

Evaluation

Evaluation is regarded as a necessary component of program development. Without some kind of feedback, it is difficult to discover how effective programs are; what kinds of changes occur as a result of them; whether goals and objectives are being achieved; and the kinds of modifications needed for efficient, effective delivery. Yet in ISE, evaluation is a neglected component.

Evaluation is one area where we've fallen down a little bit. No evaluation plan was drawn up ahead of time. But there will be an attempt at evaluation at the end of the year. It'll probably be evaluating the [ISE] program to decide what we'll do next year.

Three teachers were unaware of any evaluation design, either personal or course/program, in their districts. Only one person indicated knowledge of an evaluation report which reflected a thorough evaluation of an inservice program, and that was executed in compliance with the requirements of a federally funded project, evaluated by an external agent.

Anytime there is federal money involved, you can believe that there is evaluation--at least as far as reports are concerned.

The procedure generally used to evaluate course/offering in four districts occurred at termination to determine the usefulness of the offering. The information would be used to plan for the following year. Sometimes the teachers were asked to rate the knowledge and effectiveness of the instructor. In one district, the course instructor is asked to write an evaluation of the workshop.

Only universities require personal evaluation and have established standards which are indicated by a grade. Teachers enrolled in

college-credit courses given in the school district are often required to submit a product--usually a paper--which, if acceptable, entitles them to a "pass" grade and college credit. In other ISE offerings, respondents indicated, there was no personal evaluation or followup; mere attendance was sufficient to obtain inservice credit.

Non-attendance was the only reason for failure. If you showed up, you got your one or two credits.

Some teachers were requested to submit a statement of "followup objectives," but there has never been any followup to determine whether the objectives were achieved--or even pursued.

Most evaluations, then, seek to determine the usefulness of the courses and workshops offered and the competence of the instructors, and are done by the participant-teachers. But there is little or no evaluation of the participant-teachers to determine how their classroom behavior has changed as a result of their participation in inservice education.

When asked who sees the evaluations and what results from them, only half of the teachers responded. Some indicated that the results were sent to the instructors and school district administrators, but they were unaware of the purpose served or the effect of the evaluation. The district with the thematic plan sent the results to its education association leadership, the administration, and the school board, and a summary to the district staff. In two other districts, results were sent to the inservice committee, the subject area leaders, and the office of staff development, where the results would be used for the following year's planning.

Research

Research is an area that everyone thought would be productive and appropriate, but is nonexistent.

I think there is the possibility of some rather meaningful research, but I don't see anyone with the time to do it. I think that's what's missing in a lot of inservice . . . it's done off the top of our heads when we have time to do it. It's like a stepchild. This is the first time in my experience there's been this kind of thought, effort, and backing given to ISE.

Educational research into practical areas is what we need to be doing.

I do think research should be included, to see how effective [the inservice] really is and how much information that is given is really taken back and put to use.

Research activities could help to determine the effectiveness of ISE and how it affects classroom activities. It was also suggested that, as a result of research efforts, communication about inservice education might be improved and new sources of support for ISE might be generated.

It's quite obvious to me that there are things going on. Teachers have sensed needs but don't know how to turn them into

language for proposals. What they have is an almost inarticulate sense that they want something that will help them plan for the next five years.

Several of the teachers responded to questions about research in a way that suggested they thought of themselves as subjects rather than researchers. One teacher warned that ISE research would have to be done cautiously, since teachers in that district have come to resent it. Because of proximity to a major university, the teachers in the district have been "researched to death."

It does not appear that many teachers see themselves as researchers, or ISE as the medium in which they would engage in research.

I would think that most teachers who are interested in research would prefer to go to the university rather than . . . inservice. In general, when people think of inservice education they think of a more informal, loose offering where you might have some assignments but where you don't have reams of papers to write. I think that is one of the attractive features of inservice.

Funding

One of the best indicators of the priority given inservice education is the allocation of funds for its operation. Providing free or less costly workshops is only a small part of what needs to be done. Other possibilities might be the development of comprehensive programs planned and coordinated by staff members for whom this is the sole responsibility; inservice education opportunities available during the school day; and complete support for inservice education as described in the conceptual definition set forth earlier in this paper.

Funding should definitely be part of a local budget.

Funding of ISE is irregular and rarely top priority.¹³ Few districts have allocated adequate funds for the development of comprehensive ISE programs; only one of the ten districts has set aside a large sum of money to develop such a program. As the size of the school budget decreases, the ISE offerings also decrease, suggested one teacher.

"Resources supporting professional development come from individual educators themselves, the local school district, state and federal government, and private funding sources."¹⁴ The funding can be examined from two perspectives: (a) how the individual is funded in professional development activities, and (b) how the entire program is funded. Teachers were knowledgeable about the resources available to the individual, but most were uninformed about fiscal arrangements relating to program development and implementation. Little was known about the sources of funding and the means by which the money was allocated.

Offerings which were not credit-generating were free. College credit-generating courses available on-site in the district were often free, and in one instance the local school district subsidized graduate courses on the college campus as well. Projects supported by federal funds often had free ISE components on-site during the school day. ISE in the school

district was free, while the individual paid for college courses. Sometimes the costs were shared by the school district. This situation further supports the distinction identified earlier between college courses and district ISE offerings.

My personal feeling is that any time you go to anything outside your professional day, it shouldn't cost you anything and you should be reimbursed for your time, whether the reimbursement is through graduate credits or through actual payment. Several avenues are possible--government funding, university funding, the state department of education, and the school district itself.

The business-military model of professional development which includes training and job renewal as an integral part of the work day at the cost of the employer was espoused by the teachers. Provision for this, they believed, should be included in contract negotiations.

Both the NEA and the AFT believe that ". . . the public school system carries the responsibility for the material support of in-service education."¹⁵ Darland suggested that ISE is an integral part of professional practice and further provisions should be made. Yet it has been observed that staff development programs are given low priority at the bargaining table.¹⁶

I would like to see it [the professional organization] become more involved in inservice.

I can see where ISE should be negotiated as part of collective bargaining in other school systems, where teachers aren't as lucky as those in my district.

Suggestions for additional funding were: (a) that the professional organization provide financial support for ISE--although one teacher countered that organizations do provide support through the exercise of leadership and the contribution of time, especially in relation to the negotiation of contracts seeking to achieve more teacher involvement in ISE planning; (b) that the professional organization try to include, within the 180 school days required annually, a flexible number of days to be used for ISE within the school building; and (c) that a multi-district consortium or teacher center seek to obtain funding, through proposal writing, from sources other than the local school districts.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT INSERVICE EDUCATION

The state of the inservice education scene is unsettled and erratic. The situation is confused. ISE programs and offerings in the ten school districts differ vastly from place to place, even in communities with similar resources and demographic characteristics. There are tremendous differences in the way ISE is planned, supported, and implemented.

Those interviewed agreed that ISE offers the possibility of significant contributions to professional development, although they acknowledge that frequently it is inadequate and does not address the needs of the teachers. While some teachers were very optimistic about changes occurring in their districts, others saw little possibility of change and were angry and resentful.

A look at the role of teachers as participants, instructors, and planners in ISE leads to the observation that the teachers interviewed are totally involved in the participant role--usually voluntarily, but sometimes because it is required. While some ISE is regarded as worthwhile, some is considered a waste of time. Seven of the ten teachers interviewed had served in the role of instructor and had designed and instructed ISE offerings, generally in curricular areas. However, they had not had ample opportunity to participate in program planning, nor been sufficiently involved in needs assessment. The role of planner of professional education has not been given enough attention. This may account for resistance and dissatisfaction voiced by some teachers. Not fully a part of the planning process, teachers have little feeling of involvement and responsibility.

Federal funds have made a difference in inservice education. Frequently federal projects provided prototypes: many of the programs supported by federal funds had a staff development component which enabled education personnel to engage in inservice education during the school day, and which required evaluation procedures. Attempts were made to relate the inservice instruction to the effectiveness of the teachers' performance in classrooms with pupils.

People generally accept what they are used to and their expectations are often determined by their experiences. Teachers are no different. As they encounter programs which build in such experiences, the teachers' expectations change and new and different ways of engaging in inservice education become apparent to them.

Certainly, with the renewed concern about the state of inservice education, the general agreement of teachers about the importance of ISE, and the stable, "greying" teacher population, there is sufficient justification to increase the emphasis on inservice education and make it a top priority in school districts around the country. ISE must cease being scattered, sporadic, and unsystematic. Underfunding must end. Attention should be given to the deliberate development of programs that will encourage learning as well as research and will contribute information about teaching efficacy and the impact of inservice education.

Future Directions--Toward Meaningful ISE

It seems clear that new directions are needed for inservice education. It is time to reexamine and redefine the purpose, process, and substance of ISE. It is time for change. School districts must formulate district-wide

plans for programs which include collaboration among the different groups responsible for and served by inservice education. Identification of and support for an ISE coordinator and staff responsible for planning and implementing a cohesive program based on teacher, school, and student needs are imperative.

Support should be provided for upgrading and expanding professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes in new and different ways. The integration of ISE into the school day, absorbing the costs of professional development and recognizing those teachers who have made a significant contribution to ISE, should be encouraged. Utilization of the research about adult learning could give added impetus to the design of alternative ways of delivering inservice education, measuring its effectiveness, and allocating credit for it. Recognition that teachers are motivated to learn and do learn in ways different from their pupils might foster innovative designs for ISE, and build in the necessary research and evaluation that are now so sorely lacking.

The following suggestions are offered as possible ways to achieve meaningful inservice education:

1. The inservice program should be considered an integral part of the total school program. To that end, provision should be made for planned, comprehensive, continuous staff development, instruction, and training on-site during the work day; a program open to and planned for all district staff members, not just teachers.
2. The inservice program should have a distinct identity, recognized by and visible to the entire community. This goal can be achieved by making available an adequate inservice budget and an adequate full-time staff.
3. The inservice program should have a well-organized, responsible governing mechanism, which might include a governing board and/or an advisory committee, with subgroups such as building councils. Membership should include elected representatives of the district staff--teachers, professional education organizations, administrators, supervisors, teacher center personnel--and representatives of local universities. Such groups might be responsible for approving and coordinating the program; authorizing expenditures; planning and executing needs assessments; program implementation; research; and evaluation.
4. The inservice program should include a comprehensive mechanism for identifying district needs--those of the programs and the personnel.
5. The inservice program should reflect, in the planning of offerings, the involvement of those for whom the offerings are designed. These offerings should be meaningful, interesting, and appropriate to the goals and curricular needs of the district and its staff.
6. The inservice program should provide diverse, flexible offerings that address the current concerns of the practitioner and can be utilized readily in the classroom. Offerings that deal with current trends and practices in education should be included.

7. The inservice program offerings should be free to teachers and should generate credit for salary increments, certification and licensure requirements, advanced degrees, and career ladder options.
8. The inservice program should include a plan for evaluation of the total program, individual offerings, and the program's effect in the classroom.
9. The inservice program should include a plan for research which would provide information about the program and its impact, and which would enable teachers to engage in action research to improve education in the school district.
10. The inservice program should provide a dissemination mechanism to keep the district staff informed of staff development opportunities, schedules, and sites. This communication appears to be a real possibility if ISE is integrated into the total school program.
11. The inservice program should be staffed with the best qualified district personnel as well as others from the community and university who are identified through a brokering system.
12. The inservice program should place special emphasis on staff development at the building level, and should involve the principal as well as the teachers in planning and implementation of activities in each building.

Teacher centers are another possible mechanism for effective inservice planning, delivery, evaluation, and research. They could be integrated into the district program, or they could be the staff development center. The teacher center is an ideal site for staff development along a professional continuum from preservice through all phases of inservice education. The utilization of the teacher center concept could make accommodation for remediation of the needs and deficits identified in this paper.

NOTES

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- 14 Florio and Koff, p. 1.
- 15 Robert D. Bhaerman. "A Brief Statement of the AFT's Views on In-Service Education." In: Creative Authority and Collaboration. Inservice Teacher Education Report IV. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, 1977. p. 140.
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